WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. II.] AUGUST, 1886. [No. 8.

We would remind subscribers that several of them have allowed more than half the current year to pass before forwarding their subscriptions. These amounts are small, but, in a work like ours, even small aid and encouragement are greatly prized and needed.

ARE MIRACLES TO BE REVIVED?

The common impression with regard to the miracles which accompanied the first preaching of the gospel is, that they were given merely to authenticate the message. They are the first chapter in the evidences of Christianity which is now closed. Against this view, however, there have always been some to protest. For example, in recent times, the movement under Edward Irving, which issued in the formation of the "Catholic Apostolic Church," was based upon the conviction that all spiritual gifts, including miracles, were a permanent endowment to the Church. Dr. Horace Bushnell, in his book on "Nature and the Supernatural," takes this ground, and cites proofs that these gifts still linger in the Church, and have never been wholly withdrawn from it. The Roman Catholic Church has always taken this view. A correspondent of the *Morning Star*, in a recent letter from Jerusalem, speaks of finding there a small party of American Christians, who have taken up their abode in that city in the belief that a change in this present dispensation is close at hand, and that a new one will succeed, in which "the power of God

will be manifest as never before, and miracles will be the order of the day, instead of being the exception, as now." The marked interest in many quarters in faith-healing involves this same question as to whether the age of miracles is past.

This question is one of great interest. If the object of the early miracles was merely to furnish signs that the apostles' doctrine was from heaven and not of men, then the necessity for them may have passed away. Although no one would deny that they would still be a powerful auxiliary in introducing the gospel to new regions. But this view of their purpose is a very partial one. Miracles were rather "signs" that the Church had been endowed with a supernatural life from a new source, the risen Christ, the Prince of Life. If this life-endowment be permanent, then we have a right to expect that its effects would continue to manifest themselves. From this point of view miracles are seen as belonging to the normal state of the Church. The absence of them proves that her life has declined and that her condition is abnormal.

Concerning this whole subject we have to remark:

1.—An extraordinary power of miracles was bestowed upon the early Church. We are apt to forget how marked a feature this was of primitive Christianity. A few quotations from the book of Acts will serve to recall the facts. In connection with the scenes at Pentecost we read, "And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Ch. ii. 42). A little later we read again, "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the

people; insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the street, and laid them upon beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: And they were healed every one (v. 12–16). "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great miracles and wonders among the people" (vi. 8). In the eighth chapter, in connection with the preaching of Philip at Samaria, we are told that "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, when they heard and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: And many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (viii. 6–8). The preaching of St. Paul to the Gentiles was accompanied with the same signs. At Ephesus (ch. xix) God wrought special miracles by his hands, "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

These extracts will give us an idea of how extensive and striking was this feature of Christianity at its first introduction.

2. In regard to the nature of these miracles we observe that they uniformly relate to some form of bodily disorder. There is an occasional mention of another form of miracle, as in the case of St. Peter's deliverance from prison by an earthquake. But the uniform charac-

teristic of these early "signs" was that they were beneficent and life-giving. Their one striking trait is the presence in God-inspired men of a new and higher power of life, which was imparted through them to others. The Holy Spirit in them was a new life-endowment from the new source, a risen Christ. It vitalized them with new energy, so that such a man as Paul, who had abounding infirmities, was able to undertake journeys and endure hardships and sufferings, and do a prodigious amount of work, such as would have been impossible without divine aid. And this triumphant power of life in them overflowed in blessing to others. God made them the channel of healing to multitudes of sick and weary ones. It is remarkable, too, how large a proportion of those healed were afflicted with what we call "nervous" disorders. Many diseases ascribed to evil spirits in that day were precisely similar to the epilepsies and various forms of idiocy and lunacy with which we are familiar. Perhaps the popular faith of that day, which ascribed a great variety of diseases to the influence of evil spirits, was as near right as our guesses, which we dignify by the name of science, about malaria and bacteria. "Many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed." The restoration of vital power to diseased and inert limbs and organs, the assuaging of violent and excessive action among the life forces, were the chief class of effects wrought by this divine energy. We have no instance of the creation of a new limb or organ;*

* The claim of Dr. J. M. Buckley in the June *Century* that Jesus "restored limbs that had been cut off," is not made good by the passages (Matt. xv. 30, Luke xxii. 50) to which he refers. It is not necessary to suppose that the ear of the high-priest's servant was wholly detached, or that a new ear was created.

only the revivification or rectification of those already possessed. It was a mistake, therefore, in Dr. A. A. Hodge, in a recent lecture, to demand this higher kind of proof from the advocates of "Faith Healing." Nor is the frequent cavil that modern instances of such healing occur mostly among subjects of nervous disorder a just one.

The principal fact about all these early miracles was the presence among men of a most potent *vis vitae*, a renovating, healing power of life from Him who is the Life of the world.

3. Another fact about these miracles is that the church, as the body of Christ, was the depository of this divine power. It was not granted to isolated individuals, apart from their connection with and relation to the whole body. This is explained in 1 Cor. xii. 4–11. "Now there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. . . . And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another faith, by the same Spirit; . . . to another gifts of healings; to another workings of miracles; . . . to another divers kinds of tongues; but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." The power of miracles, therefore, resided in the *church*, and was one form in which was manifest its organic life. Hence the exhortation of St. James: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church."

But the important question again recurs: Were these gifts designed to be permanent? Or were they temporary proofs of a divine commission, the necessity for which has passed away?

In reply, we remark:

1. There is nothing in the original grant to the church of this miracle-working power which implies that it was to be temporary. When our Lord first sent out His disciples to preach that the kingdom of God was at hand, He conferred upon them these powers (Matt. x) as proofs of it. Just before His death, He assured His disciples that after He was glorified they should do even greater works than He had done (John xiv. 12). After His resurrection, He commanded them to go into all the world, promising to be with them unto the end of the age, and declaring that these same signs should follow them that believe. "In my name they they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The doubt about the genuineness of these closing verses in St. Mark does not set aside their testimony, inasmuch as these very signs did accompany His gospel wherever it was preached. The Apostle Paul, in the 12th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, already quoted, speaks of these gifts as a part of the regular endowment of the church, and as necessary for the complete exercise of its functions. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after

that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" There is nothing in any of these allusions to this feature of primitive Christianity to show that it was to be only transient and incidental. On the contrary, it is everywhere assumed that where the body is in a healthy, normal, state there will be these manifestations of its indwelling supernatural life. It must be borne in mind that the whole doctrine and mission of Christ assumes that He came to quicken the world of mankind, dead in trespasses and sins, with a supermundane life. This is of the very essence of His salvation. That a new energy of life, healing, transforming, renewing, should accompany the progress of His church, is just what was to be expected. Such "signs" were not only proofs of His resurrection. They were the very power of it, working in men the spiritual changes and the physical health of which His resurrection was the pledge and the source.

2.—As a matter of fact these miracles were not confined to the apostolic age. It is a well-accredited fact of church history that they continued long after the death of the last apostle, and that with diminishing force and effect, this healing stream from the Fountain which God opened for the world in His risen Son can be traced all down the centuries. There are those who claim, as we have seen, that its rivulets of blessing have never sunk out of sight in the world's desert sands. All admit, of course, that the mighty energy

of the Holy Spirit is still active in the regeneration of human souls. All Christians too trace the quickening of the world's intellectual life, and its marvellous conquests over nature, to the same source. But, there are many who believe still further that men are still blessed by it in body as well as in spirit.

3.—But, we are ready to take a still more advanced position, and to assert not only that these gifts were designed to be permanent, but also that the Church can never do the work she has been called to do without them. They are a part of her necessary equipment. For what is the nature of that renovation of which she is the chosen instrument? It is nothing less than the transformation of man's whole nature, physical as well as spiritual. Indeed, the whole creation is waiting for a great deliverance, through the outbirth of this new man into the world, that perfected body of which Christ is the head (John xvi. 21; Rom. vii. 19–23). The roots of the evils which now curse mankind lie deep in the constitution of this present order (cosmos). The sin of man's nature is as truly physical as moral. And a salvation which reaches man's spirit, and leaves his body unblessed, only half does its work. Such an one is handicapped in the Christian race, crippled and burdened. I am well aware that the complete redemption of man's body lies beyond this present life, and will be effected only through its resurrection. But, I also know that, in the early times, the first-fruits of this renovation began to appear with conversion. A new and super-abundant energy of life wrought not only in the hearts and bodies of believers,

but flowed out through them in healing streams of blessing to multitudes of sick and distressed men around them. These early miracles were signs that God had raised up a new king of men, with power over all the physical evils that curse mankind,—power to assuage their passions, to cure their morbid appetites, to remove their maladies, to cast out the evil tempers and the foul demons that sorely vex them, to heal the lame, the halt and the blind, the palsied and the demented, and so to destroy all the works of the devil. This is the kind of salvation the world then needed, and that it yet needs. It wants a Saviour who can grapple with and bind all the enemies that entrench themselves in both the bodies and souls of men, or in the fastnesses of the present system of Creation, and make all things new. The miracles of the New Testament were not only signs that such a Saviour had come from God. They were the first-fruits of that salvation, the first drops, betokening showers of blessing when "He shall come down like the rain."

We say then that the Church never can do her work of saving mankind without this miraculous energy. Her shame and weakness now is that she has lost it. She has quenched the Spirit. She has been broken up by divisions. She has become a leaky vessel, unworthy to contain this divine energy, and incapable of holding it. Miracles, instead of being temporary and abnormal, are necessary to her normal state. She never will do God's work in the world without them. It is only as she is re-endowed with such supernatural energy that God can use her, and bless her to make known His

way upon earth and His saving health among all nations. Moreover, nothing is more clearly predicted than that she shall, in this way, in an age to come, show forth His glory.

It is not, however, to be inferred, because we thus hold that the power of miracles belongs to the normal life of the Church, and is essential to the mission which God is preparing her to fulfil, that we must at once give credence to all the reports of supernatural healing that come to us in these days. We have already said that such wonders are not only possible. They would be the ordinary occurrence in a normal state of the Church. But such is not now her state. And, therefore, while we view the awakened interest upon this subject as a proof that the Spirit of God is moving the minds of His children about it, we have no right to expect that this can be now an ordinary law of His working. We have already seen that these gifts pertain to the Church as a body. They are an effect of her organic life. They have died out in the Church because that life has declined. And that life has declined mainly because the body has been shattered. God "hath set" these gifts in the one body. But, where now is the body? What one Church or denomination represents it? Shall God bestow gifts, which were expressly designed for the building up and perfection of the one body into a unity of faith and life in Him, upon any mere fragment of the body? And shall we look for them among any class of Christians, who are not deploring this divided state, and searching again for the true grounds of unity, and praying for

the welfare of the whole body, no matter what becomes of their "denomination"? It is because the sect spirit rules still so strongly in the Church of God, because there are so few that sigh and cry over these shameful rivalries and divisions, and so little striving after the true unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, that we must still look with hesitating suspicion upon the claims of modern miracle-workers. We would by no means deny that God often works outside His own appointed channels. There always have been, and there may be now, cases in which the faith of individuals may rise to grasp blessings of which the whole body has proved unworthy. But such cases must be infrequent and exceptional. Let "the whole body be fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part" (Eph. iv. 16), and the broken channels of its power would be restored. Miracles would be at once apparent. There can be no sustained and healthy circulation among dissevered members. And, hence, no vigorous life. Let it be understood that we regard our modern notions that the various denominations of Christendom are "branches of one Church," "members in one body," as foreign to the whole idea of the Church as outlined in Scripture. "Is the Christ divided?" Do not all these maintain and push forward their separate organizations, each for themselves, and not for the welfare of the body? Do they work together as if they were but parts of one communion, each striving for the good of the whole? Let the little congregations of these sects in any of

our large cities, each struggling for pre-eminence, competing for the same territory, bidding as rivals against one another for popular favor, and sometimes biting and devouring one another, give the answer. It is for this reason that we are earnest believers in, and advocates of a united Church. It is because we know that she must remain shorn of power and weak before her foes so long as she is thus divided. Her supernatural life cannot put forth its energy among a group of *disjecta membra.* It needs a *body* in which to dwell. And God will not put the special honor upon a fragment which belongs to the whole.

The great question of these nineteen centuries, the question which in these last days is pressing fast toward its final solution, is this: Is the world, as now constituted, capable of throwing off its heavy burden of evils, or must a supernatural aid reach it which is "not of the world?" Does this system of nature suffice within itself for its own recovery, or must there be a life put into it which is over and above the course of nature? Can the human race deliver itself from the power of sin and death, or does it need a divine Deliverer? Can it throw off its maladies, and yoke down its own passions, and overmaster the physical evils which have weighed it down in the mire, or must it be re-invigorated and transformed by the Spirit of God from whom it first received the breath of life? The question of miracles is bound up with these questions. It is the old question between Christ and anti-Christ. The world is fast hastening on its solution. It is putting its trust first in anti-Christ, in the possibilities of development, in progress and

science and education and art, until it will find out that these things cannot touch the root of its disease, that they heal its hurt but slightly, and that anti-Christ is a deceiver, professing to destroy the works of the devil, and yet but a satan in the garb of an angel of light. It will thus learn that no one but the true Christ can save it. And it is time that the church were getting ready to manifest this Christ, and to do His "greater works," by seeking to come into perfect union with Him and with one another, so that she may, as at first, become a fit vehicle of His life and organ of His power. For it is only as we are made perfect in one, as Jesus was one with the Father, that she can work the works of God, and convince the world that "God is in the midst of her," and that the Father sent the Son to be its Saviour.

PRAYER.

O God, who hast knit together all who have been baptized in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ into one mystical body, bless, we beseech thee, the one body of the one Lord, Carry each member of it safely through his appointed trial and discipline. Replenish it with all Heavenly gifts and graces. Heal its dissensions and divisions. Let the power of Thy Spirit be manifest in all its holy offices and ministries; that so taught and guided and governed by Thee, we may all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So shall we evermore offer unto Thy Holy Name the incense of true praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

STUDIES IN THE BIBLE.

RETRIBUTION IN APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

Our studies of the words of Jesus concerning future punishment, judgment and resurrection, have convinced us that the destruction awaiting the sinner is an imminent peril, that hell, for him, lies this side of resurrection, that judgment has been passed upon him and sentence already pronounced, and that his future resurrection is not for these purposes, and for increase of retribution, but in the line of God's redemptive working, even where it perpetuates trial and judgment. We have also seen that that passage in Rev. xx, which depicts the judgment of the great white throne, and which, more than any other in Scripture, seems to militate against this view, may yet be harmonized with it—indeed must be so reconciled, unless we are to deny the manifold promises of blessing to all the generations of mankind through the Christ in whom all are to be made alive. All that is needed is that we interpret the vision as a prophetic picture, on one plane of canvass, of prolonged processes of resurrection, and of judgment, and of palingenesis, with special prominence given to the fact that all things belonging to the old creation, and all men, who do not yield to the transforming power of the Christ, must perish with the old order before the coming of the new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. But as this penalty of "the lake of fire" is visited upon men who have been raised out of death to another life, it must be a punishment due

for the sin of that life, and because of failure to respond to the gracious influences by which it was surrounded. The penalty for the sins of this life had already been executed, inasmuch as these men had already suffered death and had been consigned to hell, out of which they were now restored to life.

It will be perceived then that our doctrine differs from the old church-doctrine in that it makes room for other operations in an age to come of the grace and power of God, such as are required by the fact that He has provided for all men another gift of life through the Second Man, in lieu of that which they lost in the First. This involves the denial of the view that, before all the masses of mankind who, through successive generations, have died in their sins, there is in reserve nothing but an unending hell of misery, and that not even resurrection can bring to them a single ray of hope.

Our purpose is next to inquire into the doctrine of retribution as it lies in the sermons and letters of the apostles. How did these inspired servants of Jesus interpret His words concerning the wrath to come? And how did they urge them upon the attention of their hearers?

We have recorded in the Acts the text, or the synopsis, of some fifteen addresses, made, with one exception, by St. Peter and St. Paul, who were the special bearers of the gospel message to the two classes of mankind, the Jews and the Gentiles. Most of these make some reference to a future punishment. The report of Peter's Pentecostal sermon ends thus; "And

with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts ii. 40). After the healing of the lame man he again solemnly told the people that, in crucifying Jesus, they had rejected the Christ, and killed the Prince of Life, whom God had now raised and glorified. But that still pardon and blessedness under His reign, and the fulfilment of all the covenant blessings pledged to Abraham, were held out to them upon their repentance and confession of the Name of Jesus. But every soul which should not hearken unto that prophet should be utterly destroyed from among the people (iii. 23). The national hopes involved the hope of resurrection; and so, as the priests and Sadducees were drawn around the speaker, "being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead," Peter testifies again to the Messiahship of Jesus, and re-affirms His resurrection, and declares, "Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (iv. 12). Stephen boldly charges home upon the people their long accumulated guilt. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One: of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (vii. 51–33). Although he cuts them to the heart by his sharp speech, he does not speak defin-

itely of the punishment awaiting them. But, as they stoned him, "he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Later, we find Peter rebuking Simon Magus as follows, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God" (ix. 20, 21). In the house of Cornelius we find him testifying to the Risen Jesus as the ordained Judge of all men, living and dead (x. 42).

In the 13th chapter, St. Paul comes to the front as the chosen witness to the Gentiles. At Paphos, he denounces Elymas the sorcerer as one "full of all guile and all villiany, a son of the devil and an enemy of all righteousness, perverting the right ways of the Lord" (vs. 10). And the hand of the Lord smote him with blindness for a season. At Antioch he warns the people of their danger in rejecting the Christ in these words, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you" (vs. 41). To the rude Lycaonians at Lystra, who imagined him to be a god, he seems to have uttered no such threats, but to have urged them to forsake their idols and to turn to the living God who made all things, and filled their hearts with food and gladness (xiv. 15–17). At Athens he closes his address with the warning that God, who had overlooked the times of ignorance in the past, now commanded all men to repent, "inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He is about to judge the world in right-

eousness, by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (xvii. 31). In the 24th chapter, before Felix, he sums up the hope of the gospel he had been preaching, as a "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" (vs. 15.) Before Felix, he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and impending (μελλόντος) judgment, until his royal hearer trembled. This apostle's preaching always assumes that men by nature are in darkness, and under the power of Satan, that they need remission of sins, and salvation both from sin and from its doom (xvi. 30, xxvi. 18, 19). And the accounts of it close with his solemn testimony to a representative company of his own countrymen at Rome that the Jews were blinded to the grace and glory of this salvation of God, and that henceforth it should be sent unto the Gentiles (xxviii. 23–28).

We have thus cited or referred to all the passages in these specimens of apostolic preaching which refer to future punishment, The question we desire to ask from them is: Do they fairly set before men the danger of an everlasting punishment in hell?

In order to a fair reply we have to observe, first, An entire absence from these addresses of such statements and appeals as we might justly look for in view of such a danger, It is only in the way of remote inference that this doctrine could be gathered from anything contained in these first typical sermons. The strongest phrases are those of Peter, where, quoting from Moses, He warns the Jews that the rejectors of

the Great Prophet would be utterly destroyed from among the people, and of Paul, at Antioch, who quotes from the prophets a warning to despisers that they shall perish. Neither of these threatenings, as first uttered by Moses or Isaiah, carried with them the idea of eternal torment in hell. And, it is altogether gratuitous to suppose that the Jews, or the proselytes, or the Gentiles, who made up the audience at Jerusalem and at Antioch, would attach any such meaning to them. Granting that a portion of the Jews of that day did believe in the eternal conscious existence in misery of some wicked men, they did not believe such a destiny to be possible for Jews. Moreover, some of them believed that the worst sinners would be annihilated. And the words of the apostles are much more consonant with that view. But, the point we make is that it is irrational to suppose that, if the apostles put that meaning upon the words of Jesus about the eternal fire which we have attached to them, they would have been so reticent concerning this inconceivable peril. If all their hearers were in danger of dropping into this eternal hell, there to be tormented, first in soul, and after resurrection, "with unspeakable torments of body and soul in hell-fire, with the devil and his angels forever," can it be possible that they would not have spoken more plainly of this awful doom. Where else should we expect the plainest utterances on this tremendous theme, if not in these first inspired proclamations? The attempt has lately been made by Prof. Austin D. Phelps, of Andover, to show that the silences of the apostles, as to this matter, prove that the es-

chatological teaching of Jesus had already been diffused and accepted, that it was a thing "fixed and familiar in the beliefs" of men. This is a most unwarranted assumption. But, granting its truth, can we suppose that a feature of such immense importance should be so uniformly left out of these appeals by which the apostles urged men to take refuge in Jesus Christ and be saved? Familiar beliefs are those upon which we most rely in urging men to duty. Or, granting that their Jewish hearers needed less to have this infinite danger held up before them, how can we account for it that the address to the rude Lycaonians at Lystra contains nothing of it, and that, while Paul spoke to the cultured sceptics of Athens of Him who was appointed to judge the world in righteousness, there is no record of his warning them that, by the sentence of this divine Judge, they would be cast into the hopeless agonies of an endless hell? Neither in his words, nor in the sneering criticisms made upon his address, is there any evidence that he alluded to this appalling issue. These Gentiles had not been familiar with the teachings of Jesus upon this point. And the most fearful conceptions of their pagan mythologies were infinitely below the horror of this awful fate. And even these were made a mock and jest of among the loungers in the Academic groves of Athens. No other view is reasonable than this, that the first preachers of Christianity did not put the meaning upon the words of Jesus to which we have long been accustomed. They did not believe that before all mankind except the little handful of Christian

disciples, there was one long night of hopeless, endless despair. They doubtless believed that there was a great danger before sinful men, a fearful looking for of judgment, a possible loss of soul and body in hell, a failure to enter into life, and a resurrection of judgment. But even such apprehensions of wrath to come were balanced and tempered by their belief that a light of hope had arisen for all the world when Jesus arose, that, in the grand sweep of His triumph, all the promises of blessing to Israel and to mankind, spoken by the mouth of holy prophets since the world began, would be made good, that His ascension was the beginning of "times of restitution" whose widening circles should embrace "all things" (iii. 19–21), and that, therefore, the "hope toward God" covered even the "resurrection of the unjust" (xxiv. 15).

No worse fate for incorrigible sinners can be extracted from their words than their final and utter *destruction.* But even this must be such a destruction as consists with their future resurrection from the dead. What lies before them beyond that they do not reveal. Only a glimpse is here and there given of hope beyond. It is only in the epistles, written afterwards to their converts, that they disclose more of the unsearchable riches of Christ. So that, while we are not warranted in deriving a doctrine of universal salvation from these first models of gospel preaching, we are certainly forbidden by them from holding up before men the terrors of an everlasting fire of hell. We are instructed by them in more merciful views of God, and in wider views of the scope of His salvation. But while these

sermons do not fit in to the long-accepted theory of future punishment, they certainly do warn men that they stand in present need of *salvation* from sin and death and hell, that this salvation is in no other name than the Name of Jesus, and that, whatever possibilities may be involved in God's gracious provision to recover the human race out of the pit of death into which sin has cast it, there is now an imminent destruction out of life and manhood, and away from the light and bliss of God's presence, awaiting every sinful man who refuses to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

There is one other consideration necessary to a proper understanding of these first presentations of the gospel. The apostles seem at first to have contemplated the possibility of the wide-spread conversion of mankind to Christ. St. Peter, after Pentecost, speaks to his fellow-countrymen, as if the whole nation might now submit to the risen Jesus, and so inaugurate His world-wide triumph (iii. 12–26). But the martyrdom of Stephen soon dispelled this anticipation, and the way was prepared for gathering a new spiritual seed of Abraham from among the Gentiles. Peter received Cornelius and his kinsmen and friends, as the first fruits of this harvest. But it was reserved for Paul to pronounce the definite turning away of God's electing grace from tbe Jews, who judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, to the Gentiles (xiii. 44–48). And to him it was gradually revealed that it was not God's purpose now to convert all these nations, but to gather from among them a chosen seed. At Antioch, only "as many as were

ordained to eternal life believed" (vs. 48). The Lord encouraged him to remain a long time at Corinth, for He had much people in that city (xviii. 10). But he was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to go to other places he was intending to visit (xvi. 6–8). In such ways God was teaching him that the object of his mission was not to accomplish the conversion of all men indiscriminately wherever he might go, but to be His instrument in gathering out from these nations that chosen company who were to be God's instruments of wider blessing to all mankind in the future administrations of His kingdom. But it is only in the way of suggestion that we have in the Acts an occasional glimpse of this feature of the divine purpose. It is reserved for the epistles to plainly reveal it. But we see, in these few glimpses, another reason than that already given, why the apostles' preaching did not have about it that character we might have expected, if we must regard them as sent out on a misssion to all their fellow-men of salvation from the doom of an endless hell, and to present to them a test by which their destiny should be everlastingly fixed. The fact that their preaching did not have that character is a proof that it was not designed to present this test, and that this is not the issue which is imbedded in the truth as it is in Jesus.

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

PREMILLENIALISM.—*The Presbyterian Journal* observes that it is worthy of note that the Moderators of the last two General Assemblies were both pre-millenarians. During the recent session the Moderator in preaching upon the Lord's commission, "Go ye into all the world," etc., left no doubt as to his position. It is strange that Dr. Marquis, who was thus honored, should so recently have been inaugurated as a Professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, while another able and honored brother, Dr. S. H. Kellogg, should have been forced to give up his chair because of his open advocacy of these views. All this proves how inconsistent the position of our church is upon this important matter.

The fact is, very many of our brethren do not perceive clearly the issue which is raised by Millenarian views. Many of the advocates of that doctrine do not themselves clearly apprehend it. The attention is fastened upon certain accessories rather than upon the real point at issue. It is commonly supposed that Millenarianism means the visible, personal reign of Christ for a thousand years over the earth, in somewhat the same way as earthly monarchs rule. Whereas it is not the *mode* but the *fact* of His manifested rule that is in question. The real point at issue is, whether, before the kingdom of God comes to its predicted triumph, there must not be a new opening out of the power and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, for judgment upon his enemies, for the overthrow of those hidden, spiritual, forces of evil that have put a yoke of bondage to corruption upon man, and upon this natural system to which He belongs. Must not a new economy be introduced,—one that will be a *revelation* of a power now restrained, and of a glory now hidden? All Christians virtually admit that there must be some such intervention. Some regard it, however, as merely an increase of that spiritual power with which the church is now endowed. This is true, so far as it goes. The church does now possess the germ of all gifts and graces necessary to this result. But a resurrection was necessary even to the Christ, before He could enter into His glory.

And so the New Testament teaches that a chosen seed, "they that are of the Christ" (see Greek), the Christ-body, must be made like Him, at His coming. And it is only after this that He proceeds to put down all rule and authority and power, and to subdue all enemies under His feet. In other words, in some way, (about the *mode* there may be differing opinions) a body of resurrected men, transformed into His image, must be brought into immediate connection with the world's affairs, in order to this end, that the kingdom over it may become the Lord's (Rev. xi. 15). It is not essential to this view that their appearance upon this theatre of the world should be a visible one. Although its effects must be gloriously visible.

Here, then, is the real question at issue between the pre- and post-milienial theories. Millenarians have perceived, as their brethren have not done, that God's great work of redemption, as of creation, proceeds by stages. There is not just one age, the present, and all other ages a gathering up of the results of this. There are many ages to come. There are new economies of grace and power to be unfolded. The great crisis to which the New Testament continually directs our faith and hope, the coming, or the revelation of Christ, is not the winding up of all things, but only the end of this age, and the introduction of another "age to come." In the ordinary view, all God's grace is limited to this age. The next is a mere summing up of results in reward or punishment.

In the Scriptural view the salvation of a limited and selected class in this age is but a first fruits of wider harvests. It ts but the training, through the much tribulation of "this present evil world," of a chosen band of kings and priests to take part with Christ in the future administrations of His ever-widening dominion.

The gist of the whole controversy lies then just here. Is the gospel, as now preached, designed to effect the salvation of all the world, or only to gather a people out from the world? Is the salvation of the world to be accomplished in this age, or is the way now being prepared for a new economy of grace and power, during which all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God? Questions about a visible kingdom, with its seat at Jerusalem, about the visible appearance of Christ and His saints in the clouds of Heaven, and so on, are not at all vital to this issue. We may

differ about all these. The writer certainly does not go with many of his millenarian friends in many things to which some of them attach great importance. But as to the main and vital point, whether there are not treasures of grace and power now *hidden* in the Christ, and which must be *manifested*, in the winding up of this present dispensation and the introduction of another, before the earth shall be *filled* with the knowledge of His glory, we have no doubt, and would speak with no uncertain sound. In our view the salvation of the world is a far deeper and richer result than most Christians imagine it to be. It involves its emancipation from *physical* as well as moral evil. And this Satan the God of peace shall shortly bruise under our feet.

CHRISTIAN HONOR.—The *Truth*, in its last issue, informs us that a Conference will shortly be held by leading advocates of premillenial views, and that the answer of the Conference to certain strictures which have been lately passed upon those holding this doctrine will probably be a formal demand upon

"General Assembly, Council, Bishops, and other ecclesiastical authorities, asking a decision of the question whether those who hold to the pre-millenial advent of our Lord are maintaining a doctrine contrary to the standards of the various evangelical churches. If the highest ecclesiastical courts decide that the doctrine is a heresy, those who believe it can either renounce their faith, or take their departure from the bodies to which they belong."

It will be an honorable thing in these brethren to raise this issue. They have a right to know whether the sneers with which their doctrine is often met are to have the sanction of the bodies to which they belong. And their duty to the church requires that she shall be compelled to face this question, and to authoritatively decide whether those who are waiting for the Lord's return, in order to the world's salvation, are cherishing a false hope. The question whether they shall be tolerated or not will not meet the case. They have a right to demand that the church shall pronounce upon the truth or falsity of their doctrine.

We strongly dissent, however, when the *Truth* goes on to say:

"No man has a right to stay in a church, and teach or propagate what that church condemns as error; and hence the only

honorable course open to the pre-millenialist, if his supreme court pronounces him a heretic, is to withdraw from his former associations. Of course, it is not meant by this that the truth or falsity of a doctrine can be determined by a majority of votes, but no Christian gentleman will choose to remain where he is not wanted."

We object to this because of the low view of the church implied in it, and because one's obligation to remain in it or to withdraw is placed upon so low a level. The only right which any Christian body has to exist lies in the fact that it is endeavoring to realize within itself the idea of the church. And the church is not a voluntary association from which one has a right to withdraw at pleasure, or as a matter of convenience or gentlemanly propriety. Especially every ordained teacher in the church has duties to the body to which he belongs. If he believes it in error at any point, he is bound to do his best to enlighten it and induce it to forsake its error. This he could not do, if, because of its refusal of his views, he were at once to withdraw. He may be cast out indeed, and then his responsibility is ended. But the fact that his church's creed is against him is only a proof that he should first seek to have it modified. Nor should even an authoritative decision against his views, of itself, lead him to go out, unless he is satisfied that he has faithfully discharged his mission to his brethren by seeking to bring them into the larger light which he believes God has given him for their benefit. No one would accuse Luther of a lack of gentlemanly feeling because he did not at once leave the church, when he found himself differing from it, or even after she had put his doctrines under a ban. If the doctrine of the church, as the body of Christ, and of its members, especially its pastors and teachers as "set" in it by the Lord for the welfare of the whole, had not fallen very low among us in these latter days, the editor of the *Truth* would not have expressed himself as he has done above.

Before leaving this subject we express the hope that the proposed Conference will carefully discriminate between the essentials add the accessories of pre-millenial doctrine. Its disrepute among Christians is, we believe, largely due to the distortions and accretions with which many of its advocates have loaded

it, and also from the failure to give their due place to certain aspects of truth which are plain to the other side in this controversy, and which they hold to be important. Notably, they have so urged the fact of a future manifestation of the glory of the Christ as to depreciate the fact that He is already administering this high office, to which God exalted Him when He raised Him from the dead (Acts ii. 36).

The Andover Review, in criticizing the action of the Managers of the American Board for their refusal to commission certain young men who offered themselves to go as missionaries to the heathen, thus compactly condenses its argument:

"The damnation of the mass of the heathen, final, irreversible, without an offer of a Saviour, is not—thank God!—a part of the Congregational Creed, nor of the belief of the Church Catholic, and any attempt to enforce it is a serious blunder."

This argument would be more forcible if it conceded

1.—That the "mass of the heathen" are now under a definite condemnation, from which they need immediate salvation, and that this must reach them in this present life.

2.—It may then justly claim that, after the death-penalty has been visited upon these sinful men, and they are reclaimed to life through resurrection, this event must bring, at least to all who have not definitely known and rejected Christ, an opportunity of salvation through the Only Name by which men can be saved.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"J. F., M.D." writes to us in the interest of the doctrine of universal salvation as follows:

"The passage in Rom. v. 19, if there was no other proof in the Bible, so plainly teaches the doctrine of the salvation of all men, that it is to me a cause of greatest wonder how any unprejudiced mind can fail to perceive it. You admit—you must do so—that 'the many' of the first clause of this verse includes the whole race, not one soul excepted. What warrant then have you to limit 'the many' in the latter clause, who,

it is said shall be *made righteous*, to a part only of the race. The two refer to the same number, and consequently, the whole race that sinned, must, and will be, made righteous.

I was once a believer in the non-resurrection of the wicked, but feel thankful that God has given me higher and nobler views of His plans and purposes, and of the workings of His infinite love, and pray that you, as well as others may soon see that His love embraces the whole race; and that as Adam, our Head, represented the whole race, who fell in him, so Christ, the second Adam, represents, as their Head, the whole regenerated race, the *all*, who rise with Him. May God help you, my dear brother, and lead you to see this blessed truth. There will come a time when there shall be no more crying, tears, pain, nor *death*. How can there be no more death, if any part (if the second death be literal), of the race remains eternally under the power of death. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' No more death implies the deliverance of all from under its power, and if so, then they must all live, and live forever.'

To the brother's argument from Rom. v. 19, we reply:

1. That we do not limit "the many" in the latter clause. We agree with him in holding "that *totals* are compared and contrasted," and it is the *same total* in two successive conditions, namely, the *human race*, as ruined in Adam, and recovered in Christ.

2. The Greek word here rendered, "made righteous," does not refer to a subjective work of righteousness wrought in men, but to an objective state, or relation of righteousness, into which all are brought by the second Adam. As to what this relation involves we are plainly told in the previous verse, "So then, as through one trespass the judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came came unto all men to justification of life." So far then as the right to life is concerned, which the first man forfeited for all, it is won back for all by the Second. All are constituted righteous in that they are set free from the claim death had on all. But the first man did not forfeit *eternal* life, because he never had it. He was created a candidate for this high dignity, but not its possessor. What he lost in the fall was the life with which he was endowed. And what Christ has won

back for all the race is the life thus lost. He has power indeed over all flesh to give eternal life to all who receive Him. This "abundance of grace and of righteousness" is given to all such. And they shall reign in life. (vs. 17). But so far as the race at large is concerned, His headship secures for all only the human life once forfeited, not the eternal. This implies that "all shall be made alive." It implies further a restoration to life freed from the adverse conditions, inherited from Adam, which rendered certain the depravity of all. But while these resurrected ones are freed from the guilt of original sin, the harvest law of God's government requires that they shall receive in body the fruit of *their own* doings. And so all do not start in this new trial in life upon the same level. And therefore there is no assurance that all will lay hold on eternal life. In other words, the gracious covenant by which all are justified to life, through the ransom paid for all, does not provide for all the gift of a pure and endless life. This high boon remains still to be bestowed upon them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for it. And that some fail, seems to be implied in the fact that they suffer the second death.

That this death is not literal, but a symbol of restorative suffering, is maintained by our correspondent. His view is that the promised destruction of the last enemy, death, implies that all are to be delivered from its power, that, therefore, the second death cannot be continuous, and that the promise of "no more death" requires that all death's captives be restored.

Our friend, however, overlooks a difference between the first death and the second. The first death does not put an end to those who suffer it, inasmuch as they are to be raised again. They may therefore be properly viewed as captives "held under the power of death." But if the second death puts an end to its victims they cannot be viewed as death's prisoners. They are extinct. And if the lake of fire proves to be the final grave of all God's enemies, so that sin and death are forever destroyed out of His universe, it is proper to speak of this consummation as the destruction of death, although all who have ever been slain by it are not recovered. If, in a state where murder

had been common, and the penalty of the gallows frequently inflicted, there should come about such a condition that murders should entirely cease, and the death penalty be a thing of the past, it would be proper to say that, in that state, there was no more murder, and that the gallows was abolished.* So, if a perfect antidote to the cholera were discovered, we might say that that disease was destroyed, although its former victims should not be restored. If we could conceive of the victims of the second death as still in existence, and therefore as possible subjects of some further operation of divine power, we might view them as still under death's dominion. And therefore the word could not be spoken, "There shall be no more death." But if the second death be final, and there be no more victims for death to prey upon, and no more captives in his domain, then this last enemy is truly "abolished."

FROM a letter received from a clerical brother we subjoin some extracts as illustrating the spirit in which many ministers of the Presbyterian Church regard any attempts to revise its creed.

"I do not find that I can make any practical use of your discussion. I admire its tone and style, and sympathize with your effort to have our Confession of Faith remodeled upon a more Scriptural basis, but I have no heart to try to overcome the dead weight that settles against such a movement. It will come, I doubt not, but not in *our* day. The first article in the July number gives me a little more light on your views, but I have no interest in the discussion. I no longer go to the Confession for statement of doctrine, and confine myself as to future retribution and reward to the general statement of Scripture, supported by reason, that sin must produce suffering hereafter as well as here, and that righteousness must work out its reward. Beyond death I know nothing definite, except that it is horror of darkness to unrepentant sinners, and blessedness and light to the redeemed in Christ. How long suffering lasts I don't know. I *hope* it stops some time. I can trust the Heavenly Father to do all that *love* requires, while I can press upon all men the warnings and threatenings of His Word. My whole time and strength are taken up in trying to keep a church alive to good works and save my neighbors from *present* sin and misery."

---

* This is the word of the R. V. in I Cor., xv. 26.

Over against this discouraging estimate of the work we have undertaken we venture to place that given by another correspondent, whose name stands among the highest of those in whom our Church confides, and who writes:

"I have been delighted with your work and bid you Godspeed."

Indeed all the justification our work needs may be drawn from the admissions contained in the above extracts. Our friend admits that the Confession is not now perfectly based upon Scripture. He no longer goes to it for statements of doctrine concerning future rewards and punishments. He admits that revision must come, but not in our time. And why not, pray? If it is a right thing to do, why have not we as great responsibility about it as the men of some future day? And is not our responsibility rather increased than set aside by the fact of the Church's indifference? If "the dead weight that settles against such a movement" be a sufficient excuse, where is there any room left in the Church for heroic faith and self-sacrifice? Is not the Church put in the world to witness from God to men? And is she not under the highest obligations to be honest in her testimony? and, especially, upon the inconceivably important matters ot human destiny? Here, if anywhere, her authorized statements should be most carefully and truthfully framed.

Our correspondent evidently believes that our present formulas either misstate or over-state the truth, Otherwise, he would feel free to use them. How is it possible, therefore, for him to relieve himself of responsibility in the matter? As an ordained minister and ruler in the Church, he is under solemn obligation to see, so far as in him lies, that the Chnrch shall bear an upright testimony before God and man. The fact that he is too much occupied in doing good is not the least excuse. We venture to remind him that his efforts "to keep the Church alive to good works," and to save his neighbors from sin will be frustrated by just so much as he gives them occasion to suspect that either he, or the Church he represents, is not perfectly candid and truthful in dealing with matters which bear with such tremendous weight upon their present and everlasting interests.